

TRAVEL

1. A41. RICHMOND BRANCH

“That ICPA QLD continue to lobby relevant bodies to provide reduced air fare costs to rural and remote students to access educational institutions.”

Carried

With the recent Senate enquiry into the cost of airfares in rural and remote areas, this significant issue has been publicised. Now it needs to be addressed. It is untenable that families who live and work in our remotest parts should have to pay such premiums, at times equivalent to international flights, to give their children the education all children deserve. For reasons of common sense and child safety, air travel is most often the most practical option. Transporting children to and from school via the quickest, safest option should not be a significant budget consideration, yet it is forced to be for remote families and that just isn't OK.

2. A42. TAMBO BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. continues to lobby the Department of Transport to have the conveyance allowance calculated from the home garage not the property boundary in rural and remote areas.”

Carried

Explanation: One of our families has been driving 32 kilometers every school day as part of the school bus drop off and pick up. For the entire primary school life of the children, no conveyance allowance has been received. This has been due to the fact that the bus stop is on the family property, so currently renders the family ineligible for conveyance allowance. To allow for this type of situation occurring for our Rural and Remote families and to make the conveyance allowance a fairer system for families where travel is solely on their property the Department of Transport could utilize The Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure Map as a guide to determining and establishing new eligibility criteria. To further strengthen the need to reassess a family put a shortcut road in on the family property for ease of access to the nearest town. This was not a gazetted road, just a convenience road. What this meant was that the families conveyance allowance was then changed to be calculated from that turn off instead of the gazetted road turn-off (entrance). On 2 separate occasions (2 different years) the department sent a representative to check application details to make sure the family was not getting paid the KM from their entrance but from the shortcut road. These checks would have cost possibly more than was collected in conveyance allowance for the year. The lost conveyance allowance for the family was 25 km/day, which became unpaid travel one way (50kms every school day).

3. A43. BLACKALL BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby the Department of Transport & Main Roads and Translink to align the distance eligibility for Secondary School Students to be the same as Primary School Students at 3.2kms in areas classified as Isolated.”

Carried

Explanation: Students living in Rural and Remote Australia face many challenges in order to obtain their education. The impact of year 7 being moved into Secondary School has had a major impact on rural and remote school bus services. A student as young as 11 years who is in year 7 is deemed ineligible to travel on the school bus, whose primary school brothers and sisters meet the eligibility to travel on the school bus as the family lives more than 3.2km but less than 4.8km from the nearest State School. The discrepancy between Primary and Secondary distance criteria not only has a significant impact on the student in year 7 and his/her family but also all the families that access the school bus in rural and remote area due to the school bus not being able to meet the required minimum number since the student is now in Secondary school and doesn't live the required distance from the nearest state school. There is a duty of care to be given to these secondary students given the summer temperatures averaging last year 45c at 3pm walking home on remote highways.

4. A44. BLACKALL BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobby Translink and Department of Transport that a bus run in rural and remote Qld not be cancelled due to reduction in numbers in drought declared areas.”

Carried

Explanation: During the recent prolonged drought, there has been staff reduction. This has for a time affected the number of children on school bus runs. Often either mum or dad has to find employment off-farm, so one parent may be left for periods of time at home alone feeding/watering remaining stock on a daily basis. They cannot afford to employ a governess and time does not permit them to support the children sufficiently to school at home. This reduction in numbers would have already affected the small local school and therefore taking more children away from it has a huge impact on the viability of the school and also its staffing numbers.

5. A45. WESTMAR INGLESTONE BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby Translink to create a policy on bus route cancellation and communication in rural and remote areas.”

Carried

In the past there has been an agreement between Translink and rural and remote bus route consumers that bus route closure would involve the following:

Bus routes are considered non-viable when numbers fall below five. Previously Translink has agreed to discuss this with individual bus runs pending forecast student numbers and exceptional circumstances.

An agreement that one school term notice be given to bus runs closing to assist families in making other arrangements was previously discussed.

ICPA Qld and Translink have recently discussed the possibility of utilising ICPA as a go-between for bus runs and Translink in a ‘preventative’ context, as opposed to a ‘reactive’ context. I.e: Discussing potential bus closure so that parents are aware of future actions, instead of after the bus run has closed.

Our branch would like to see a policy on Bus Closure and Communication created so that there is consistency across Queensland. In doing so, there is an expectation that irrespective of who is in charge of, or acting in a role in charge of bus run, a clear policy would outline appropriate actions in the instance of a bus route closing, creating less confusion and frustration for all parties involved.

6. S13. BOLLON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc. lobbies the Department of Transport to increase the frequency of Conveyance allowance payments from bi-annually to more frequently.”

Carried

Explanation: Members are grateful for the State Government’s acknowledgement of challenges faced by those in remote areas to attend school through the payment of the Conveyance Allowance. Currently the payments are made twice a year in lump sums. We request that these payments be made more frequently so families can better manage their budgets and pay travel related expenses as they arise.

7. S15. RICHMOND BRANCH

“That ICPA QLD Inc. endorse the Inland Queensland Roads Action Project and its goals to secure more consistent and long-term funding to councils in order to improve the safety and resilience of connectivity in the inland road network across Queensland (west of the Bruce Highway and outside South East Queensland).”

Carried

Explanation: Families in rural and remote areas rely heavily on the road network for gaining access to education and health facilities, or for linking to air and rail services that connect to education and health services. They deserve to have a higher level of safety than current levels provided.

The inland Queensland road network experiences a range of safety problems. Long travel times

between remote communities leads to fatigue which becomes deadlier in a less forgiving road environment that has narrow seal widths, inadequate sight distance, a lack of overtaking opportunities or unsealed and single lane sealed roads.

In 2016, 251 people died on Queensland roads and 6,321 people were hospitalised. A disproportionate number of these people were in regional Queensland.

As shown in Figure 1, the road deaths in regional and remote Australia are disproportionately high relative to the rest of Australia. (source: Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics, Road Safety in Australia 2017)

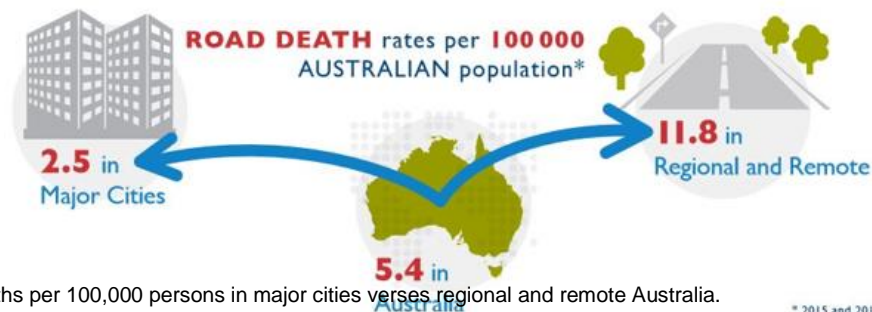


Figure 1. Road deaths per 100,000 persons in major cities verses regional and remote Australia.

9. F7. KINDON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld Inc lobby Translink and the Department of Transport to provide definitive guidelines or policy in regard to bus safety, travel and route closure in rural and remote areas.”

Carried.